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From-WALNUT VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

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WALNUT VALLEY WATER DISTRICT



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December 6, 2005

Mr. Lester Snow, Director
Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

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RE: South Delta Improvements Program

Dear Director Snow:

On behalf of the Walnut Valley Water District, I am writing today to express the District's support for the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP), a critical water supply, water quality and environmental project designed to meet California's diverse water needs. This October, DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released a draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/S) for SDIP, kicking off an important public review and comment process. Implementation of the SDIP will greatly enhance the District's efforts to fulfill its mission to "supply the highest quality of water at the lowest possible price."

As you know, California is facing a critical challenge: A safe, reliable, and high quality water supply is needed to keep up with the rapidly rising population and fast-growing trillion-dollar economy. However, this arid state has limited water supplies, therefore, existing water resources and infrastructure must be better utilized. Otherwise, the state's communities, farms, environment, and businesses are at great risk. Two-thirds of California receives its water from the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Given its importance; better methods to manage the Delta's water delivery system, as well as the water itself, are needed. In essence, every drop must count!

In 2000, the state and federal governments initiated the historic CalFed Bay-Delta Program to manage the Bay-Delta's water resources and ecosystem. A unique collaboration of interests supported the plan, including environmental organizations, water agencies, business interests, farmers, and state and federal water and fish agencies. SDIP is the next step forward in this long-term planning effort for the Bay-Delta.

SDIP is a responsible and balanced plan to better utilize and integrate the existing water management infrastructure in the Delta. Collectively, it will improve the state's water supply reliability, water quality, and the overall health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The program will construct seasonal tidal gates to protect fish and improve water circulation and quality in the Delta, dredge select Delta channels to improve water deliveries for local farmers, and allow State Water Project deliveries to increase modestly - only when needed and environmentally safe to do so.

Mr. Lester Snow
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Currently, the state is constrained in its ability to use surplus water supplies. The infrastructure to move the water is in place, but until SDIP is approved, the state's water managers cannot fully or responsibly use the existing system. SDIP calls for only a 3-5% increase in the average amount of water pumped from the Delta. More significantly, SDIP will provide the flexibility to shift the timing of water deliveries when surplus is available and when environmentally safe to do so. SDIP is an ideal option for California to advance - it will not require building a new project or the construction of major new infrastructure. And, funding for the program has already been secured through passage of voter approved bonds in 2000 (Proposition 13).

Importantly, SDIP will help protect vital Delta environmental resources. Specifically, it will help protect fish species in the Delta channels. At the same time, by providing the state greater flexibility in how and when SDIP operates its system of pumps, fish are granted greater protections.

Given all these points, SDIP is supported by a statewide, broad coalition of water, agriculture, business, planning organizations, and local government officials, including the Association of California Water Agencies, State Water Contractors, California Chamber of Commerce, California Business Properties Association, and the Western Growers Association.

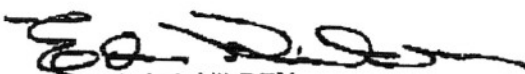
Water is the lifeblood of California - critical to its families, farms, and businesses. It is our responsibility to use this precious resource wisely through all possible best management practices, including water conservation, recycling and storage, to ensure California's water future. It is imperative that a more flexible water delivery system is available in order to accommodate growth in population and economy while relying on existing water supplies.

Again, the District strongly supports SDIP and encourages all key stakeholders to help advance this critically needed project.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

WALNUT VALLEY WATER DISTRICT



EDWIN M. HILDEN
President
Board of Directors

EMH:ja

cc: Hon. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Mr. Ryan Broderick, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Mr. Mike Chrisman, Secretary, California Resources Agency
Mr. Joe Grindstaff, Director, California Bay-Delta Authority
Mr. Kirk Rodgers, Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mr. Dan Skopac, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Mr. Terry Tamminen, Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor

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